



W4CA LOG

Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club - Roanoke, Virginia

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Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club
W4CA
P.O. Box 2002
Roanoke, Virginia 24012

Officers

President: Floyd Ponton KB4WYW
Vice President: Charlie Draper AB4SK
Secretary: Karen Anderson KI4GOT
Treasurer: Leroy Maxey AG4RW

Board of Directors

Phil Roark K4WFO
Dave Kinsey KS4BO
Leroy Maxey AG4RW
Ron Ramsey AB4A
Ray Pillow KK4HR

Appointed Positions

Net Manager: Russ Abbey KG4MAV
RVARC Chef: Bob Anderson K4UMK
Membership: Fred Krack K4HVB
Club Call Trustee: Ray Crampton AB4YZ
Log Editors: David Jones N4JED
Catherine Jones KI4EVA

The Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club meets the second and fourth Friday of the month at the Roanoke Red Cross Building at 352 Church Ave beginning at 8pm. In addition, the club sponsors a weekly net every Wednesday at 8 pm on the W4CA 146.985- repeater, tone 107.2. Check in five times and receive a number and certificate. Everyone is welcome. The W4CA Log is published bi-monthly by the RVARC for it's membership.

The RVARC owns and maintains the following open repeaters:

Voice

146.985- tone 107.2
442.50+ tone 107.2

Packet Digipeaters:

145.050 Rke5 - 1200 baud
145.710 Mill - 1200 baud

Internet Homepage:

www.w4ca.net

FCC ELIMINATES MORSE CODE AS EXAM REQUIREMENT

(ARRL) Early this year, the US will join the growing list of countries that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test as the entry ticket to HF. Announcement of the pending historic rule change arrived with no fanfare December 15 in an FCC public notice. A full-blown Report and Order (R&O) in the proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, followed December 19. The best estimate of when the Morse code requirement will go away officially is sometime in February -- 30 days after the R&O appears in the Federal Register (has not as of New Years Day).

"We . . . believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages," the FCC said in its R&O. "Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques."

The FCC says it deems the current regime of written examinations "sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license."

The FCC also ordered that all Technician licensees present and future -- whether or not they've passed a Morse code test, will get privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters identical to those of Novice licensees. "In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity," the FCC said.

The FCC took advantage of the occasion to act on the ARRL Petition for Partial Reconsideration in the "omnibus" proceeding, WT Docket 04-140, calling (continued page 2)

on the Commission to retain 3620 to 3635 kHz for automatically controlled digital stations by moving the Extra class phone band edge to 3635 kHz. The FCC decided instead to authorize 3585 to 3600 kHz for such operations, and leave the newly expanded phone band intact.

The Commission further amended Part 97 "to authorize Amateur Extra class privileges to all individuals who have been issued a CEPT radio-amateur license by their country of citizenship, and who satisfy other requirements in the Commission's rules."

Although the FCC's Morse code decision came as no surprise, it nonetheless revived debate on the issue. The FCC had proposed more than a year ago to drop the Morse code requirement for all license classes. The record in the proceeding, the FCC said, "reflects a division of views in the Amateur Radio community." After reviewing the more than 3500 comments and counter-proposals radio amateurs had filed, the Commission stuck with its initial proposal.

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, expressed; "Now that the debate is over, we can focus on learning Morse code simply for its own sake." Sumner pledged that the League would maintain its traditional support of Morse code as an operating mode and would continue to offer Morse training materials as well as such incentives as bonus credit for CW contacts in ARRL-sponsored operating events. ARRL's Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Station W1AW will keep its schedule of Morse code practice and bulletin transmissions.

The pending disappearance of the Morse code requirement seems to have

rejuvenated the urge to upgrade. ARRL Sales and Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, says distribution of General Class license training materials have skyrocketed in the week after the FCC announcement.

The ARRL has posted information relevant to the FCC action in WT Docket 05-235, including an FAQ, on its Web site <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/> .

The President's Corner

Happy New Year Everyone,

Here we go. We made it through another one!

Our "Grand Finale" for the year was our Christmas dinner celebration for 2006. And a grand one it was! We were fortunate to have in attendance, 33 RVARC members and guests.



KB4WYW experiences equipment difficulties during Sweepstakes

The evening began, as everyone was given an opportunity to socialize and to relax. Outgoing President Ray Crampton - AB4YZ kicked off the evening's festivities by welcoming everyone.

Debbie Kavitz, KE4SBZ followed by offering our Christmas blessing, followed by dinner, which, as usual, was very good. Yes, it was time to feast, and a feast it was, as we enjoyed "roast beast" (sorry, I just finished watching "How the Grinch Stole Christmas), and chicken cordon bleu (I hope that I spelled that correctly), both with all of the delicious accompaniments, including apple pie for dessert. Dinner was followed immediately by some of my "side-splitting" humor.

Our Christmas dinner celebration is also our opportunity to recognize those individuals who accepted positions of responsibility over the past year, and that have contributed so much of their time and efforts to ensure the success of the RVARC.

Ray, AB4YZ rewarded the Officers and Board of Directors of the past year by offering plaques, recognizing their responsibilities and individual contributions. The highlight of the presentations is always the recognition of that special person who has gone "over and above the call of duty" to further advance amateur radio, and who has tirelessly served our club and community. This individual is chosen by the President of our club, and is distinguished with the title of "Ham of the Year".

I am pleased, and we are honored to congratulate Ron Ramsey, AB4A, as he was chosen as Ham of the Year for the past year. Great job Ron!

I chose, this year, to also recognize our Life Members, who while appointed over the past years, are a group of individuals who are seldom mentioned, but have contributed years of service to the RVARC.

Sam Kent, K4CEK, Dick Bishop, K4SR, Stan Reas, K4UK, Bob Anderson, K4UMK, Doug Moore, K4WVS, Frank Cupp, KE4PIC, Dave Kinsey, KS4BO, and Danny Pendleton, N4NPD are all very much appreciated, again, for your service and your contributions.

Oh, by the way, I am both fortunate and humbled to be included in this group! As the President of the upcoming year, I was pleased to announce two additional recipients of Life Memberships, Ray Crampton, AB4YZ and Phil Roark, K4WFO for the nomination of Life Membership. Their names will be presented to the Board of Directors on January 12, 2007 for confirmation.

We remind everyone every Christmas in the Salem Christmas Parade that "Amateur Radio *is* Our Hobby, and Public Service *is* Our Passion". Words to live by and words to remember as we dive into 2007!!

As usual, I am encouraging everyone to start out 2007 by coming out to the meetings. There is no better way to stay informed of club events and to share in the fun and fellowship that makes the RVARC such a success!

Again, Happy New Year!!
Floyd, KB4WYW

Ham Radio Classes Start January 11

Ham radio classes will start up January 11 at the Roanoke Red Cross. Classes run for 10 weeks and begin at 7pm. Please be present before 7 the first night to register. Contact Phil – K4WFO .



Dave-KS4BO watches as Floyd – KB4WYW and Ron – AB4A operate W4CA during ARRL Sweepstakes in November. photo N4JED

Scientists Predict Big Solar Cycle,

by Dr. Tony Phillips,
Science@NASA

Dec. 21, 2006: Evidence is mounting: the next solar cycle is going to be a big one.

Solar cycle 24, due to peak in 2010 or 2011 "looks like its going to be one of the most intense cycles since record-keeping began almost 400 years ago," says solar physicist David Hathaway of the Marshall Space Flight Center. He and colleague Robert Wilson presented this conclusion last week at the American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco.

Their forecast is based on historical records of geomagnetic storms.

Hathaway explains: "When a gust of solar

wind hits Earth's magnetic field, the impact causes the magnetic field to shake. If it shakes hard enough, we call it a geomagnetic storm." In the extreme, these storms cause power outages and make compass needles swing in the wrong direction. Auroras are a beautiful side-effect.

Hathaway and Wilson looked at records of geomagnetic activity stretching back almost 150 years and noticed something useful: "The amount of geomagnetic activity now tells us what the solar cycle is going to be like 6 to 8 years in the future," says Hathaway.

Cross correlating sunspot number vs. IHV (the Inter-hour Variability Index), they found that the IHV predicts the amplitude of the solar cycle 6-plus years in advance with a 94% correlation coefficient. "These indices are derived from magnetometer data recorded at two points on opposite sides of Earth: one in England and another in Australia. IHV data have been taken every day since 1868," says Hathaway.

"We don't know why this works," says Hathaway. The underlying physics is a mystery. "But it does work."

According to their analysis, the next Solar Maximum should peak around 2010 with a sunspot number of 160 plus or minus 25. This would make it one of the strongest solar cycles of the past fifty years*which is to say, one of the strongest in recorded history.

Astronomers have been counting sunspots since the days of Galileo, watching solar activity rise and fall every 11 years. Curiously, four of the five biggest cycles on record have come in

the past 50 years. "Cycle 24 should fit right into that pattern," says Hathaway.

These results are just the latest signs pointing to a big Cycle 24. Most compelling of all, believes Hathaway, is the work of Mausumi Dikpati and colleagues at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado. "They have combined observations of the sun's 'Great Conveyor Belt' with a sophisticated computer model of the sun's inner dynamo to produce a physics-based prediction of the next solar cycle." In short, it's going to be intense. Details may be found in the Science@NASA story Solar Storm Warning.

"It all hangs together," says Hathaway. Stay tuned for solar activity.

Raleigh Court Parade

I wish to thank those who came out and volunteered for the annual Raleigh Court Christmas Parade:

Doug, K4WVS
Leroy, KG4RW
Charlie, AB4SK
Ron, AB4A

Fun was had by all at the first parade of the season. Wish everyone a Happy and Safe season.

Frank, KE4PIC.

Local Group Sponsors Special Event during January

Jan 1-Jan 31, 0000Z-2359Z, Shawsville, VA. Straight Key Century Club, K1Y. First

Anniversary of SKCC. 21.120 14.048 7.055 3.550. Certificate. Kevin der Kinderen, 3967D Oldtown Rd, Shawsville, VA 24162. QSLs awarded for contact. Certificate awarded for contact with 10 US districts. Operators will be nationwide. skccgroup.com

Road Trip to Texas.....

by Jerry – K1SO

Trying to keep up with AB4YZ/Ray on his county hunting runs, my last ride was to Dallas, Texas in November 2006. Some information for these notes, the total miles driven on the trip (round trip) was 2885. The total number of counties passed thru was 102; the total drive time in the truck was 40 hours. Now that we have all the details behind us, we'll move on to the travel and the fun of county hunting.

On my trip to Texas, I had a co-pilot in the cab of the truck, that being W1VA/Jim. By-the-way Jim is also a CH and enjoyed putting out the counties as we drove along the open highway. We left very early in the morning the first day, and since the bands were really not open we planned our starting time to be somewhere about 8 a.m. local time and that put us in TN.

Leaving early really worked out well because we started just as we crossed the state line and the game was on! Our first venture was on the 40 meter band, after making contacts on 40, we would move to the 20 meter band. Each county was placed on the air for county hunter's world wide, so as soon as we finished a 10 minute run on one band we moved to the next and would try again. In the smaller counties we might not get them completed before we crossed county

lines into a new county. That was resolved by just telling the Net Control Station you are now in a new county, they will handle the change and then will give you a new start time for the county and off you go.

As we moved thru TN, we crossed the Mississippi River into AR and kept right on putting out counties, since we were traveling on the interstate it was difficult to stop on County lines, but we had one country line which was just as we entered a rest area.

Our first days finished south of Little Rock, AR, were we put down for the night. The following morning our goal was to get to Dallas by lunch time, so we left early, we didn't put out any counties until we reached the Texas state line. Once there, we put out counties all the way to Dallas, some 318 miles. As W1VA/Jim and I drove along we gave each other credit for the counties as we passed thru, this was done by having 2 meter HT's along in the truck and making the contact with each other over the air.

On our trip to Texas we worked a total of 600 plus hams that wanted these counties. Now, information on logging while traveling. It was done with the help of a digital recorder. When we would stop, I could download the information into my laptop this allowed me to transcribe the data to paper after my return home. This is an easy way to log contacts as you drive along and also very helpful when you are by yourself in the vehicle.

On our return trip we had a little more time to make some side trips off the interstate and put out a few county lines. From time to time earlier contacts will ask if you are going to a county just off the planned travel route, so we tried to be

accommodating and help out when we could.



K1SO on the county line of Franklin Parish, LA and Richland Parish, LA

W1VA and K1SO returned via the southern route which took us thru LA, MS, AL, GA, SC, NC and then back home to VA. On the trip out we traveled thru VA, TN, and AR to Texas. So when you travel hopefully you can take HF equipment along. The time flies by and the county hunters really enjoy riding along with you.

ARRL Outgoing QSL Service revises rates

[The ARRL Outgoing QSL Service](#) has announced a new and simplified rate structure, effective January 1, 2007. The new basic rate will be \$5 per half-pound (8 ounces -- or approximately 75 cards) or any portion of a half-pound. That's a change from the current rate of \$4 per half-pound or any portion. One pound will cost \$10, and packages will be assessed \$5 for each additional half-pound (or portion thereof).

For example, a package containing 1.5 pounds of cards will cost \$15, while a package containing 1.75 pounds of cards will cost \$20. For smaller packages, the

fee is only \$1.50 for 10 or fewer cards, \$2.50 for 11 to 20 cards and \$3.75 for 21 to 30 cards.

The new rate structure will help to cover basic handling costs for smaller packages while actually offering a price break to moderate-volume users submitting up to one-half pound of cards. The new rates are in response to the recent postal rate increase and price restructuring. [The ARRL Outgoing QSL Service](#) is available to ARRL members. The last rate revision went into effect in March 2001.

Franklin County ARC places 9th. in Nation in Battery Category For Field Day by Stan – K4UK

W4FCR was the Category Winner in 5A Battery of the 2006 milliWatt Field Day as reported in the Fall 2006 Issue of the QRP Quarterly. Our score of 2,379,244 points was only bested by Bob, N4BP in Category 1E who scored 2,577,050 points.

Frank called me to say that W4FCR had placed First in Category 5A-Battery as noted on the web site of the 2006 Field Day Results.

We were duly impressed at our last club meeting to be advised that W4CA placed 12th in the nation for their score in Field Day. I feel perhaps we should advise the RVARC that the Franklin County ARC placed 9th in the nation for Battery category. Our 8,365 points was only bested by:

NM FD Coalition - AA5B - 7A-Battery
16,165
K8UO (+W8IC) - 13A 16,050

Chew's Ridge Gang - K6MI - 1A-Battery
13,605
Colorado QRP Club - W0OQC - 2A-Battery
13,160
Rocky Mountain Telegraphers - W0KV - 1A-Battery
9,190
West Valley ARA - VE3GMA - 9A-Battery
9,190
Manti, Camping/Contest Club - NC7X - 1A-Battery
8,840
K2ZR -1A-Battery 8,840

And three of those groups ran more rigs than we did.

For Sale by Members

48 foot steel tower with fold over base plate.

Mosley Classic 33

Ham IV Rotator and Control

\$500 or best offer.

73, K8KIS

GORDON S STOBBELAAR

6126 HOMEWOOD CIR

ROANOKE VA 24018

Ten-Tec Model 2425 - Two Meter Amplifier is still for sale.

\$ 50.00 or best offer (OBO)

Contact Stan – K4UK

Stamps

Another fascinating sideline of ham radio, particularly DXing, is stamp collecting. There are quite a few "radio stamps" and Merri AB0MV has put together quite a web site

<http://www.qsl.net/ab0mv/stamps.htm>

with many pictures of stamps with radio and electrical themes. The site loads slowly, so be patient. (Thanks, John

W0UN and ARRL)

100 YEARS OF VOICE OVER RADIO by, ARRL

December 2006 marked the 100th anniversary of what is generally regarded as the first transmission of voice over radio, achieved by Canadian experimenter Reginald A. Fessenden. The Fessenden station, located at Brant Rock, Massachusetts, USA, is said to have operated on a frequency of about 88 kHz using an alternator with a maximum power output of about 300 watts.

A century ago, radio -- then called wireless -- was amazing the world. A century later, radio -- once again being called wireless -- is still amazing the world in new ways. Surely Fessenden, who later in life was an active radio amateur from his station VP9F in Bermuda, would marvel at the progress that continues to be made in digital voice and other technologies that could hardly have been imagined in 1906.

Short Notes

Congrats to Ken Sturgill - WS4V of Marion for his submittal of 151 cards for VUCC. This represents 151 different grid squares confirmed on 50mhz -- most of them this year. Cards were approved and application forwarded to the ARRL. Club members can have their cards for WAS and VUCC reviewed by David -- N4JED without having to mail them off to the ARRL in Connecticut .

Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2007

- 7 Kids Day, 1800Z – 2400Z
- 7 Winston-Salem, NC First Fest 7am-11am
- 11 Ham radio classes start at Roanoke Red Cross, be there before 7pm to register. Classes run for 10 weeks.
- 12 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building Alphabet Soup contest begins following meeting.**
- 13-14 North American QSO Party – CW
- 20-21 North American QSO Party – SSB
- 20-22 ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes
- 21 Radio Exams, 2pm at Roanoke Red Cross
- 26 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building Meeting Program Software Defined Radios**

FEBRUARY

- 3-4 10-10 International Winter Contest - SSB
- 9 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building**
- 10 FISTS winter sprint 100-2100Z
- 12-16 School Club Roundup
- 17-18 ARRL International DX Contest – CW
- 18 Radio Exams, 2pm at Roanoke Red Cross
- 18 Richmond, VA Frostfest and VA State Convention
- 23 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building Meeting Program Presentation on the Virginia QSO Party by Gordon NQ4K**

MARCH

- 3-4 ARRL International DX Contest - SSB
- 9 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building**
- 17-19 **Virginia QSO Party, a W4CA event**
- 18 Radio Exams, 2pm at Roanoke Red Cross
- 23 **Club meeting @ 8pm, Roanoke Red Cross Building**
- 24-25 CQ Worldwide WPX Contest - SSB

Your stories and photos needed. I need your help and input to cover all the events that the Roanoke Valley Amateur Radio Club participates in. Please send in your photos and articles. I would be glad to help you edit your stories. Thanks, N4JED